

BAR HARBOR

MAINE

SUMMARY
REPORT



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1961-1981

SUMMARY OF
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR
BAR HARBOR, MAINE

This report was prepared in part through funds available under an Urban Planning Grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency, Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954 as amended, and the State of Maine Department of Economic Development.

James W. Sewall Company
Planning Consultants
Old Town, Maine
1962

TOWN COUNCIL

Richard S. Libby, Chairman

Newell W. Emery

James W. Campbell

Leslie C. Brewer

Bernard K. Cough

PLANNING BOARD

Harold Collier, Chairman

Gordon S. Young, Secretary

Cecil Higgins

Robert L. Gilfillan

Jack Kirshenbaum

TOWN MANAGER

Calvin A. Canney

PLANNING CONSULTANTS

James W. Sewall Company
Old Town, Maine

INDEX

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
SUMMARY FACT SHEET	1
THE EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN AND CHANGES SINCE 1948	4
PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN	7
BUILDING CONDITIONS	11
POPULATION	13
ECONOMIC BASE	15
RECOMMENDATIONS	18
CENTRAL AREA SHEET	20
ZONING ORDINANCE	22

	<u>MAPS</u>	Following Page
GENERALIZED LAND USE		4
RURAL EXISTING LAND USE		4
PROPOSED LAND USE		8
BUILDING CONDITIONS		11
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION		13
CENTRAL AREA		20
ZONING		23

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of the 1961 Comprehensive Plan for Bar Harbor was made possible through the assistance of many Bar Harbor officials and citizens in public and private capacities. Special appreciation is due the Town Manager, Calvin A. Canney, Acting Superintendent of Schools Clifford P. Tinkham, High School Principal Caswell W. Wood, Elementary School Principal G. Thomas Bowden, Jr., Chief of the Fire Department John R. Higgins, Chief of the Police Department Howard H. McFarland, Superintendent of Streets Percy L. Hall and the many other members of the town governmental staff who offered helpful information. The Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce, the Jesup Memorial Library and several private citizens generously gave their time to assist the study. The many meetings with the Planning Board were both enjoyable and informative.

Much of the information on which some parts of the planning study are based would not have been available without the patient cooperation of such state agencies as the Bureau of Vital Statistics, the Bureau of Taxation, the State Highway Commission, the Department of Economic Development, the State Library, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Education.

The Harland Bartholomew and Associates' 1948 Bar Harbor Town Plan offered much useful material and many sound planning recommendations, some of which have been incorporated in the 1961 town plan.

Professor Charles W. Eliot, II, gave invaluable assistance as a special consultant on matters pertaining to highway planning and the conditions surrounding the prospects for Bar Harbor as a service center for Mt. Desert Island.

The information contained herein is a summary of the more detailed Comprehensive Plan presented to the Planning Board. For more specific information please refer to the Comprehensive Planning Report.

SUMMARY FACT SHEET

Physical Setting:

Bar Harbor is located on Mt. Desert Island on the Maine coast. It is in Hancock County and is approximately 20 miles southeast of Ellsworth on Route 3 and 46 miles southeast of Bangor via Routes 1A and 3. The urban center of the town is on Frenchman Bay with fine views of the bay and off-shore islands. Rising above the town is a group of low, rocky mountains dominated by Cadillac Mountain (elevation 1530 feet). Bar Harbor is almost entirely surrounded by the wooded and hilly lands within Acadia National Park boundaries. The combination of scoured coastal highlands, forested slopes, many small lakes and oceanfront gives Bar Harbor one of the finest natural settings on the Atlantic seaboard.

Land Use Pattern:

The urban built-up part of Bar Harbor, including the shopping center, the Bluenose Ferry Terminal and a modern motel neighborhood, hugs the harbor coast. The primary commercial center blends gradually into a tightly developed residential fringe. The famous summer "cottages" of Bar Harbor for the most part occupy the shorefront bluffs which command a sweeping view of Frenchman Bay, both to the north and to the south of the town center. Many of the magnificent summer homes which dominated the Bar Harbor landscape at the turn of the century were destroyed in the disastrous 1947 fire, as well as several historic landmarks. Today some of the remaining estates have been converted to institutional uses. Forty-two percent of the Bar Harbor total land area is within Acadia National Park boundaries.

Population:

1930 - 4,486	1950 - 3,864
1940 - 4,378	1960 - 3,807

Transportation and Communications:

Bar Harbor is on Route 3, the single land access from the mainland. Nearest freight railroad service is by Maine Central Railroad at Ellsworth. Bar Harbor is at the Maine terminus of the Bluenose Ferry route to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Air service is by Northeast Airlines during the summer.

The Bar Harbor Times is the local newspaper.

Type of Government: Town Manager - Council

Tax Rate: \$75 per \$1000 of valuation

Valuation: \$7,391,570

Public Utilities:

Electric Power - Bangor Hydro-Electric Company
Water - Bar Harbor Water Company
Sewerage - Town owned

Public Facilities:

Town Office Building
Bar Harbor Fire Station
Police Headquarters
Town Garage
Incinerator
Jesup Memorial Library

Recreational Facilities:

Most organized public recreation facilities are related to schools. They include fields and playgrounds and an auditorium building. There is also a public swimming pool for children.

Bar Harbor maintains a municipal pier and some small urban parks, one of which is the scene of summer band concerts and art exhibits.

There are lakes for swimming and boating and one good ocean beach within Acadia National Park boundaries, also camping sites and picnic areas in addition to the vast area of hills, forests and open land suitable for hiking, horseback riding, nature studies and other outdoor activities.

The harbor at Bar Harbor was at one time a famous yachting port of call and is still used by pleasure craft.

Public Schools:

2 Elementary Schools
High School

Churches:

Catholic
Christian Science
Congregational
Episcopal
First Baptist
Methodist

Hospitals:

Mount Desert Island Hospital

Economy:

There is very little manufacturing in Bar Harbor. What there is comprises a few very small firms employing, according to the 1960 Census of Maine Manufactures, only a total of 20 people. The Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory for cancer research and the Mt. Desert Biological Laboratory offer considerable employment to local people. The Bar Harbor economy is based primarily on recreation and recreation-related retail and service business. Forty-four percent of the resident employed population is engaged in retail trade or services of various kinds.

Major Planning Problems:

The major problems in Bar Harbor revolve around the changing character of recreation on which the economy depends. Formerly, Bar Harbor was a mecca for wealthy vacationers who spent most or all of the summer in palatial "cottages" at Bar Harbor. It was this summer community which was active in developing the Kebo Valley Golf Course, the library, the Mt. Desert Reading Room (an exclusive men's club) and other organizations and facilities for recreational and cultural pursuits. The original impetus to the development of Bar Harbor as a resort resulted in the construction of several large hotels which catered to long-term visitors.

For many years after 1930, interest in this kind of summer recreation had been on the wane and the Great Fire of 1947 dealt Bar Harbor a final blow when many of the "cottages" and large hotels were destroyed. For a while, it was expected that many would be rebuilt and that things would continue about as they had in the past. This however, did not happen. Customs had changed and summer mansions had become a financial burden which few people cared to carry.

Since 1947, Bar Harbor has done little to attract the contemporary kind of vacationer, the automobile tourist. With the exception of the construction of a few large, modern motels and the gradual conversion of private "cottages" to commercial or institutional use, there has been little structural change in Bar Harbor. Meanwhile, some areas of the town which are vital to the economy have deteriorated.

Bar Harbor has an opportunity to recapture its erstwhile pre-eminence as a summer resort and as the service center for the whole of Mt. Desert Island. But major physical improvements are called for including new and better access to the town center from both the northerly and southerly parts of the island, redevelopment of parts of the downtown, heavier emphasis on the kinds of services which are suited to the needs of automobile tourists and a more interesting shopping center which can adequately serve the year-around regional population as well as tourists.

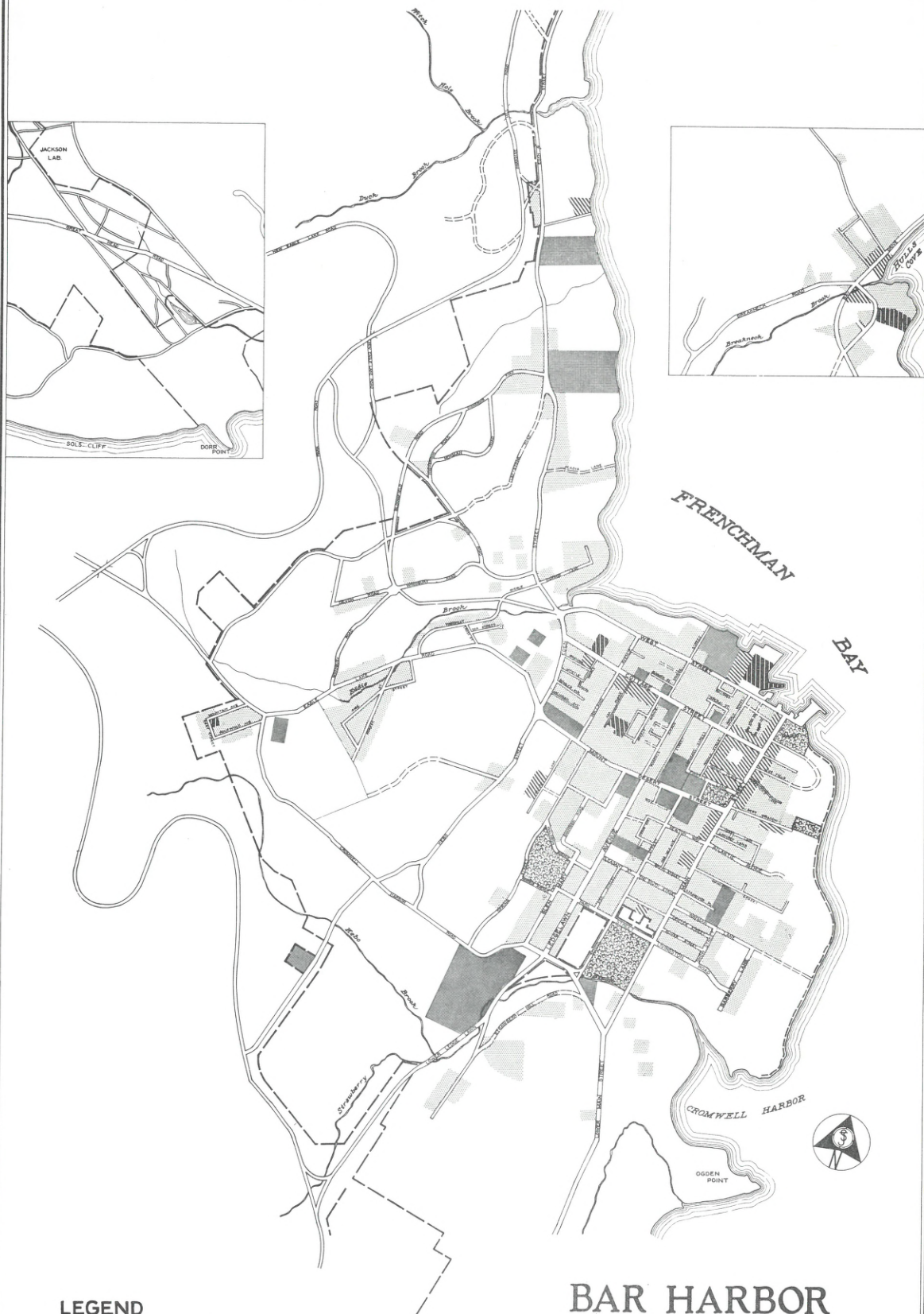
THE EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN AND CHANGES SINCE 1948

Introduction:

The existing land use pattern in Bar Harbor is a result of the admixture of the original farm and fishing village and the later resort development which dominated the culture and economy from 1870 on. The harbor was the original stimulus to settlement, first for fisherman, later for summer residents, and today the nucleus of the town hugs the harbor front. At the height of its ascendancy as the foremost summer resort in New England the hillsides and coastline were dotted with estates and magnificent summer "cottages", many of which were destroyed in the disastrous 1947 fire.

The harbor has declined in importance as ocean-oriented commerce has given way to land transportation along the Maine coast. Since 1948 the gradually changing character of the summer tourist trade which has been felt all along the Maine coast has been tremendously accelerated in Bar Harbor. Two factors have contributed to this acceleration: first, the Great Fire of 1947 and secondly, the choice of Bar Harbor as the port for the ferry service to Nova Scotia. This has brought a large number of transient tourists into Bar Harbor and almost overnight has changed it from a summer residential center to the crossroads of United States and Canada summer travel. The land use pattern clearly reflects this transition.

GENERALIZED LAND USE



LEGEND

- = RESIDENTIAL AREA
- = COMMERCIAL AREA
- = PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- = MANUFACTURING & STORAGE
- = RECREATIONAL AREA

BAR HARBOR

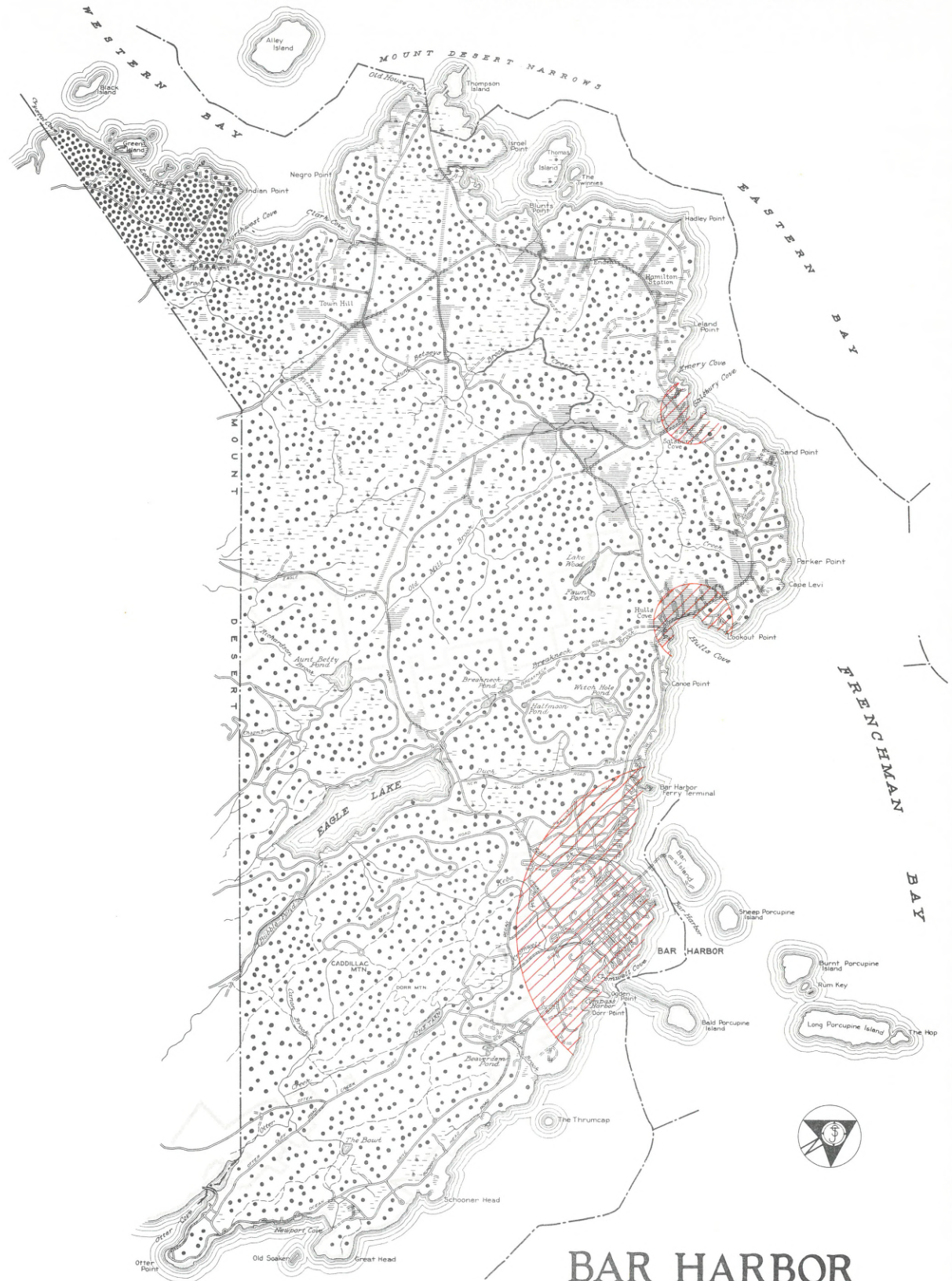
HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE
BAR HARBOR PLANNING BOARD
1960

JAMES W. SEHALL COMPANY PLANNING CONSULTANTS, OLD TOWN, MAINE

SCALE 1:3600

500 0 500 1000 1500
FEET

RURAL EXISTING LAND USE



WOODLAND
 OPEN LAND
 POPULATED AREAS

BAR HARBOR

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE
BAR HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

1960

JAMES W. SEWELL COMPANY PLANNING CONSULTANTS, OLD TOWN, MAINE

SCALE 1:18000

2500 0 2500 5000 7500 FEET

BASED ON UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DATA
 PREPARED IN PART UNDER THE URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE H.H.F.A., SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED

PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

Introduction:

The proposed land use plan is designed to serve as a pattern for the coordination of future public and private development in Bar Harbor. It is not meant to be concrete and unchangeable. Rather it should serve as a guide and as a representation of ultimate goals.

It cannot be expected that the Comprehensive Development Plan in its entirety will be valid beyond the lifetime of the present generation of Bar Harbor residents. It will need to be adjusted, and brought up to date to meet the needs of the future. The Bar Harbor of today could not be foreseen by many people thirty years ago. It is just as difficult therefore to anticipate today what Bar Harbor might be in another thirty years. Just as an architect may have to add another room to a building, the Planning Board may also from time to time need to incorporate in the plan new transportation facilities, new schools, new parks and other facilities for which needs cannot now be foreseen.

Bar Harbor has undergone tremendous changes since the disastrous fire of 1947. Since then, Bar Harbor has changed from a summer resident colony to a community serving primarily transient visitors. There is no doubt that the new status of Bar Harbor requires new kinds of thinking and action. A largely transient summer population makes different demands on the community than did the summer resident population of yesteryear. New problems call for new answers.

The proposed land use plan is designed to accommodate the transient population, to accommodate retail activities, and to accommodate service functions for Mt. Desert Island. One of its objectives is to help Bar Harbor recapture its traditional role as a distinguished Maine coast resort and as the commercial and service center of the Mt. Desert Island region.

Land Use Categories:

The proposed land use plan is a map indicating the physical location of the various kinds of land uses needed to accommodate the many activities which comprise the life of the community.

Based on existing conditions in Bar Harbor and future foreseeable demands provisions must be made for the following land use categories:

1. permanent single-family residences,
2. permanent two-family and multi-family dwellings,
3. motels, cabins, and overnight camps for transient residential use,
4. commercial uses,
5. light industry,
6. public land uses
 - a.) recreation
 - b.) schools
 - c.) parking
 - d.) other public land and shore uses

Summary and Conclusions:

Factors which will influence future land use developments in Bar Harbor are transportation, water as well as land, natural features including topography and outstanding physiographic features, Acadia National Park land holdings, and existing investments in land and buildings.

The highway proposed in this Comprehensive Plan is probably the single most important proposal in terms of influencing Bar Harbor's future role as recreational and commercial center of Mt. Desert Island. Unless highway access to Bar Harbor is improved, the town appears to be headed for continuing decline of the critical areas of urban development on which the economy depends most heavily. It is therefore very strongly recommended that Bar Harbor make every effort possible to provide this new access to downtown. Plans for such a facility can be initiated by Bar Harbor and construction could probably be undertaken with the cooperation of the National Park service, the State of Maine and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

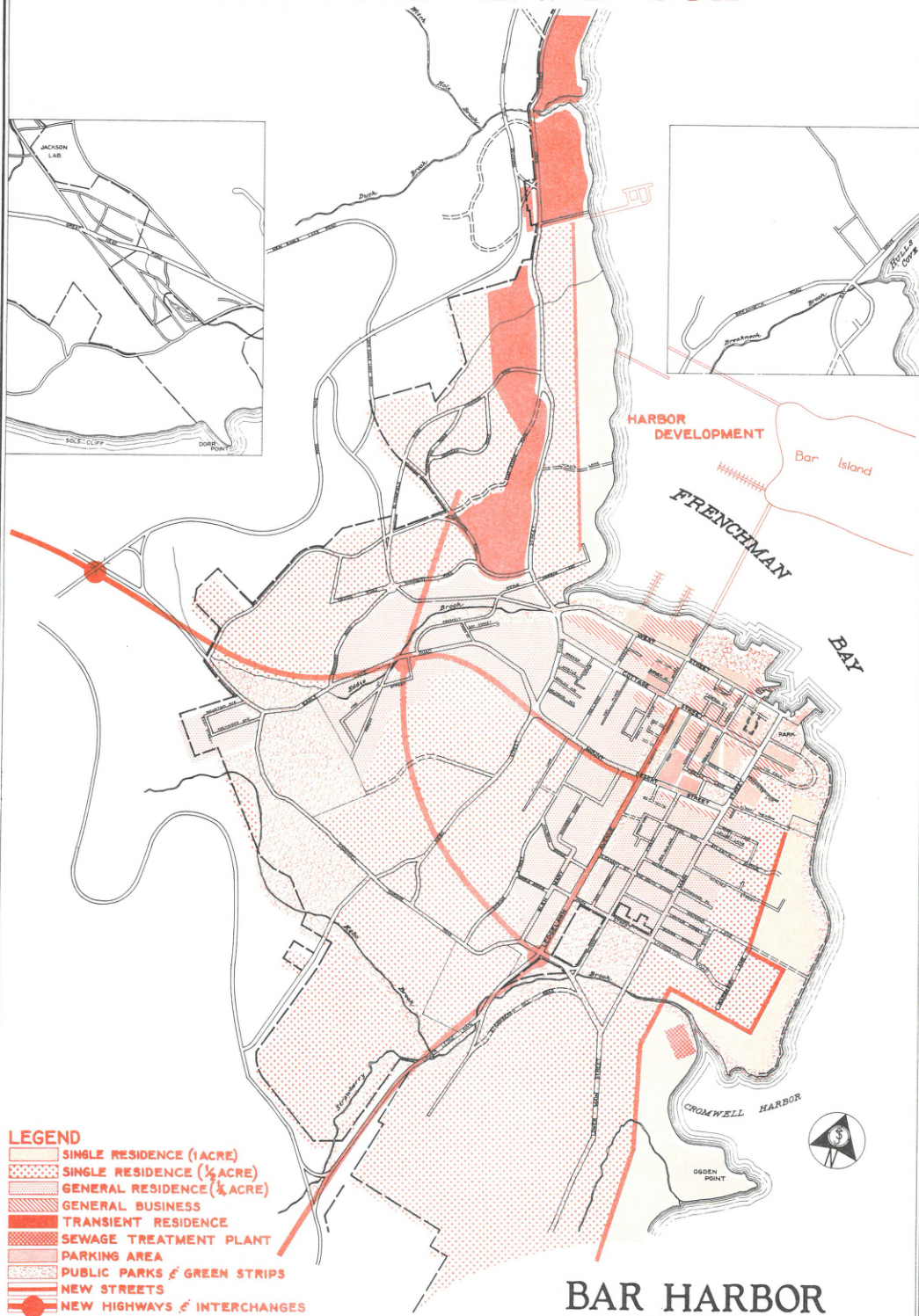
The land use proposals were also influenced by certain assumptions. One of these, that transient visits to Bar Harbor will continue to increase, is the basis for the recommended expansion of motel and overnight accommodation areas.

It was also assumed that Bar Harbor residents and businessmen are already aware of the major shortcomings of the town in relation to its economic objectives and are anxious to undertake a large-scale improvement program.

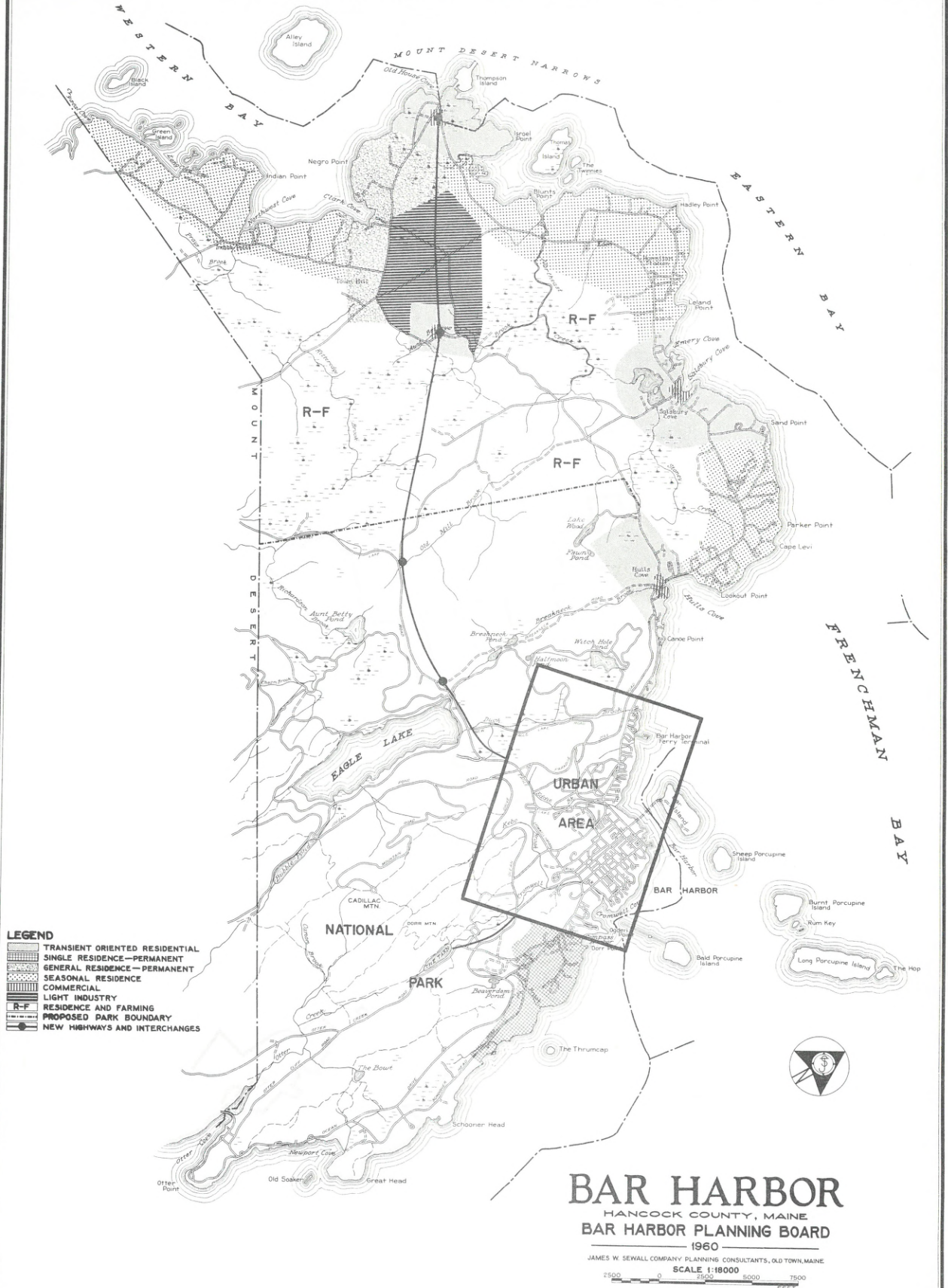
The areas where major changes are called for are not, as might have been expected, on the fringes of urban Bar Harbor. Rather, it is recommended that the central business district and its immediate environs be subjected to dramatic redevelopment in order to provide a base for a revitalization of the local economy. If action of this magnitude is not undertaken, Bar Harbor is likely to continue to lose importance as a recreational and commercial center to other nearby communities.

Bar Harbor at the present time has only two major advantages over other Mt. Desert Island communities. It has, 1.) the reputation and the name of one of the best-known resorts in the nation, and 2.) much more extensively developed public and semi-public facilities. But this alone is not enough to protect Bar Harbor from serious competition for its traditional role. In order to survive as the major service and social center for the region, a direct and fast road from the bridge at the Narrows to the center of Bar Harbor village is necessary. Also downtown redevelopment is necessary. In addition, improvement of the harbor facility at Bar Harbor to provide a yacht base for the increasing boating population would help to insure Bar Harbor's chances of survival.

PROPOSED LAND USE



PROPOSED LAND-USE



BUILDING CONDITIONS

Problems and Needs in Summary:

There is accompanying this report a map which delineates the major problem areas in Bar Harbor. In summary, it is safe to say that in at least half the built-up areas in town, there are some serious deficiencies either in building conditions or of environmental factors.

There are two major kinds of problem areas in Bar Harbor. The first and most serious is that which is characterized by conspicuously substandard dwellings - slums, in short. In some cases they are so fundamentally poor (badly constructed) or deterioration has advanced so far that rehabilitation would be impractical. Clearance and redevelopment is the only feasible answer for such areas. There are also some cases where commercial buildings are so seriously deteriorated that they constitute a safety hazard to their environs and which would not lend themselves successfully to any kind of renovation.

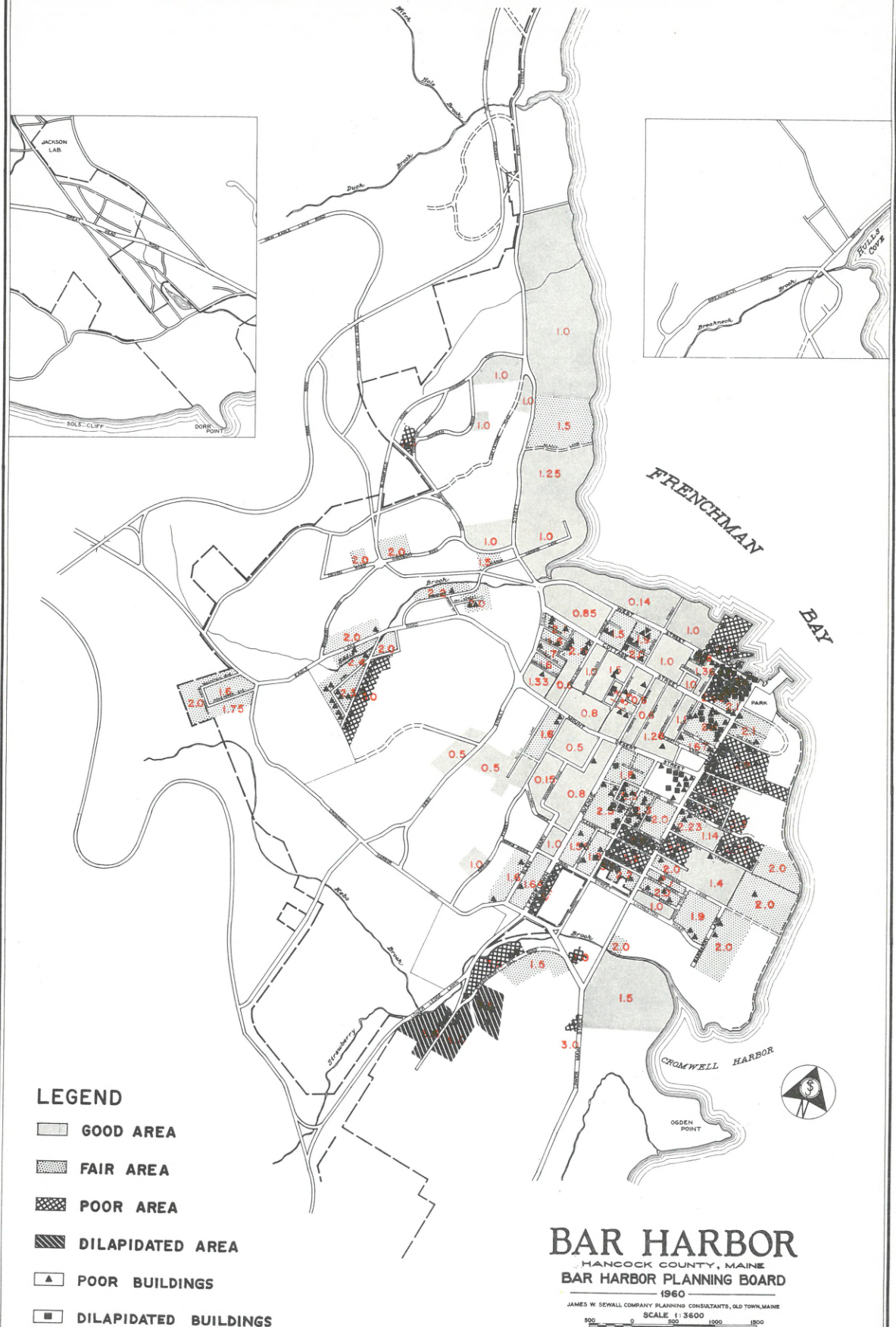
There are pockets of such serious deterioration at a number of locations in Bar Harbor but the greatest concentrations are found near the business district.

The second kind of problem area in Bar Harbor is one wherein the lot, building and street pattern is obsolete. This is true of some parts of downtown Bar Harbor. The major cause is that such areas were designed and laid out in a different age. Some of the obsolete buildings are also in poor condition because not only were they built when social patterns were very different from those of today, but they were not always very well built. Over the years, neglect has helped to cause sagging roofs and foundations, unlevel floors and moldy mortar in chimneys. Sometimes the fact that the building is obsolete encourages it to be used for inappropriate purposes which in turn further desolves it, and a vicious circle is initiated. Lack of adequate parking and traffic congestion help to contribute to the downward momentum of building conditions once they begin. Sometimes it is the other way around, i.e., traffic and parking conditions are the initial contributors to blight. In any case, wherever dilapidated or shoddy, old-fashioned buildings exist in downtown Bar Harbor, they detract from the income potential of the shopping center and prevent the construction of new modern buildings which would be assets to their sites.

There are also some areas in Bar Harbor which are affected by a relatively small amount of building deterioration which could be substantially upgraded by a conservation and rehabilitation program. There are also some areas of very good and excellent building conditions which can be preserved in that state (at least to some extent) by protective codes including zoning, building and subdivision ordinances.

Some of the poorest areas of housing and also some pockets of blight in commercial areas can probably best be treated through a clearance and redevelopment program with federal urban renewal aid.

BUILDING CONDITIONS



POPULATION

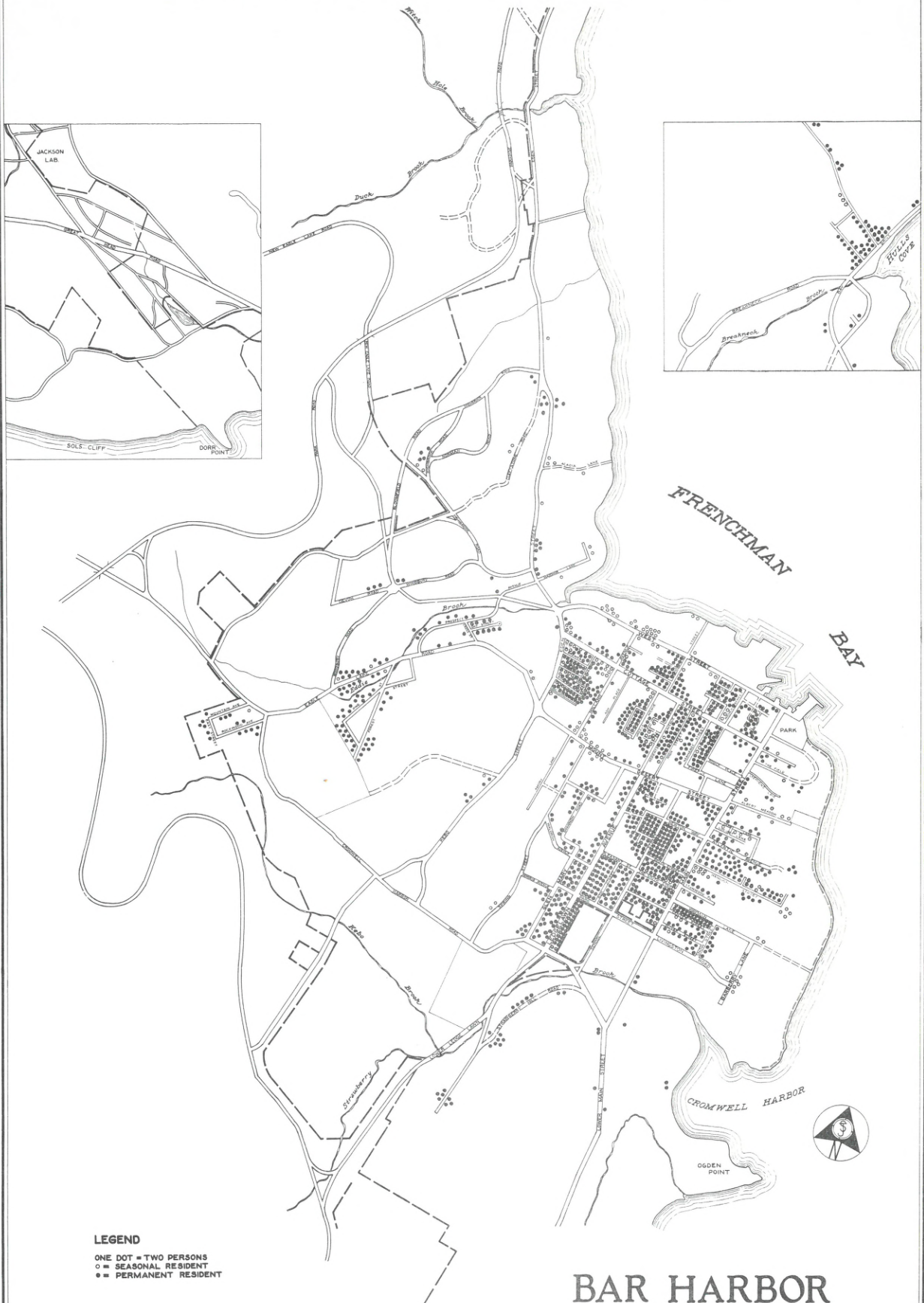
Future Population:

A population projection is simply the mathematical projection into the future of past growth trends. The basic assumption behind such a projection is that the same factors which have influenced population growth in the past will continue to do so in much the same manner in the future. Obviously, such an assumption may be unrealistic. Any number of events occurring in the future could drastically alter the factors which influence population growth. The economy of Bar Harbor is currently in transition and its future development will depend largely on factors which have not operated in the past. Therefore, any projection will require continuing re-evaluation.

A projection of the growth pattern of the 1930-1960 period would place the Bar Harbor population at about 3,581 in 1970 and 3,355 in 1980. The downward trend results from incorporation of a historical period when the Bar Harbor economy suffered a serious decline in previously dominant summer cottage oriented functions.

A projection of the 1950-1960 growth trend would result in a population of 3,750 in 1970 and 3,693 in 1980. This projection is not influenced by the large out-migration which took place during the 1940's and is probably more realistic for at least the next decade. However, it is reasonable to suppose that the Bar Harbor population will at least remain constant if the economy is further expanded in response to the stimulus of the currently growing number of transient tourists. Any additional source of job opportunities would probably result in moderate population growth. The figure of 4,500 population given by the Harland Bartholomew Planning Study as a guide for the immediate planning objectives of Bar Harbor would seem to be a reasonable one.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION



LEGEND

ONE DOT = TWO PERSONS
 ○ = SEASONAL RESIDENT
 ● = PERMANENT RESIDENT

BAR HARBOR

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE
 BAR HARBOR PLANNING BOARD
 1960

JAMES W. SEWELL COMPANY PLANNING CONSULTANTS, OLD TOWN, MAINE

SCALE 1:3600
 0 500 1000 1500
 FEET

ECONOMIC BASE

Summary and Recommendations:

Until the 1947 fire, Bar Harbor was distinctly a summer colony town. There was no manufacturing to speak of, no farming, no lumbering. Fishing occupied a few people, boat-building, repair and servicing a few more and there was a very small amount of commercial shipping from the harbor consisting of fish, shellfish, building stone and some lumber and shingles. ^{1/} The townspeople were primarily occupied with serving the owners of summer cottages - in terms of maintenance of these palatial estates and through retail trade and commercial service establishments, many of which operated only during the summer season. Although the 1947 fire was not an important cause of the decline of the summer colony, it marked the end of its era with a sharp finality. Some Bar Harbor residents had seen the handwriting on the wall long before the fire - Bar Harbor was going out of style and the signs were there to be read by those who would.

Investigations began to be made by town leaders for new sources of income for the town. An article in the March 26, 1949 issue of Business Week related the essence of the story under its title "Bar Harbor Wants Business". It said what has been repeated through other media ever since: Bar Harbor views a manufacturing enterprise as the hope for its future - a clean, light inoffensive industry located within the town boundaries where it would not only provide year around employment for local residents but would also broaden the municipal property tax base.

Many communities, when they find themselves either in fiscal difficulties or seriously deficient in employment opportunities for their residents, too quickly divert their funds and energies to attracting industry which they view as a panacea. Bar Harbor is among those towns which have little to offer industry and that little must compete with what thousands of other locations throughout the northeast can offer. While it certainly would be advantageous to Bar Harbor if, for some reason, a manufacturing concern chose to locate there, it is unlikely that one will do so. There are too many disadvantages implicit in a Bar Harbor location - it is relatively far from major transportation routes except by water, nearby raw materials are very limited, there is some question concerning the availability of a local labor pool, and the local commercial, service and even, during the winter months, recreation facilities would hold no more allure for imported industry personnel than they now do for many vacationers and for the existing indigenous population. Even a food processing or packing concern, utilizing fish as a raw material, would do better to locate on a harbor more appropriate for large-scale fishing. Bar Harbor, although satisfactory for summer pleasure craft, is only protected on three sides; on the south and west by Mt. Desert Island, from the south and north by islands and a breakwater, but is unprotected from the east.

^{1/} New England, New York inter-Agency Committee, The Resources of the New England-New York Region, Part Two, Chapter IX, 1953.

Anchored vessels are subject to storms from the east and to a continuous ground swell coming from the open sea through Frenchman Bay and around the north end of Bald Porcupine Island.^{2/} Storm danger is more prevalent in winter than summer. Needless to say, these conditions also limit the potential of the harbor as a commercial port.

In connection with the supposed advantages of attracting a manufacturing industry, broadening the property tax base and thus lightening the burden on individual home owners is a goal generally viewed by community leaders as second only to the expansion of the local employment market. However, this circumstance does not always follow and in fact if a new industry generates a need for additional town services not otherwise called for, individual residences sometimes must be more heavily taxed in absolute terms if not in terms of their share of the total tax burden. It is interesting from this viewpoint to compare Bar Harbor property taxes with those of some other more industrialized towns. In only two of the latter do home owners carry a smaller annual tax burden in dollars.

PROPERTY TAXES IN BAR HARBOR AND SELECTED PENOBSCOT REGION MANUFACTURING CENTERS

	<u>1958 Tax Rate</u>	<u>Estimated Assessment Ratio</u>	<u>Equalized Tax Rate</u>
Bar Harbor	64.00	37.0%	23.68
Bangor	26.00	100.0%	26.00
Belfast	26.00	100.0%	26.00
Brewer	60.00	44.0%	26.40
Bucksport	62.20	25.0%	15.55
Newport	94.00	28.0%	26.32
Old Town	79.00	29.0%	22.91

Source: Maine Department of Economic Development, Development Resources of the Penobscot Region, 1959.

It is the opinion of the Consultant that not only is Bar Harbor not invested with the factors sought by industry but that it is possible for the town to sufficiently diversify its economic base without additional industry and further that the future of Bar Harbor lies in another direction altogether. Bar Harbor needs to assess the resources it has and learn to use them wisely.

What are these resources?

- 1.) A location of unique natural beauty.
- 2.) The proximity of Acadia National Park with its unspoiled beauty which brings thousands of people every summer into Bar Harbor's immediate trading area.

^{2/} Ibid.

- 3.) The Bluenose Ferry terminal which brings additional thousands of tourists into and through town every summer.
- 4.) A residential pattern inherited from the opulent past which has peculiar allure for casual visitors and potential home-builders alike.
- 5.) A small but good hospital and world-renowned scientific research facilities.
- 6.) A shopping center which is relatively easily accessible from most points on Mt. Desert Island, which already is larger in area and more built-up than any other on the island and which is therefore potentially more productive.
- 7.) A colorful history reflected in its still-existing but increasingly strained reputation as one of the places to visit on the Maine Coast.

Viewed as an interrelated whole, such resources point unwaveringly in the direction of a future for Bar Harbor basically similar to its past. The town is and always has been a natural for summer recreation. Such, with new but related emphasis on retirement living and possible extension of research activities, are the fundamentals of a realistic economic plan for Bar Harbor.

An Examination of the Resources:

- 1.) A Location of Unique Natural Beauty: It is possible that the Mt. Desert Island kind of beauty does not appeal to everybody. Some people say the landscape seems dry or barren or both; some say it has an atmosphere of coldness about it or that its rocks are bare, gray and gloomy. But there probably isn't a place on earth which could please everybody and Mt. Desert Island and Bar Harbor scenery has held a tremendous appeal for many hundreds of thousands since it was first "discovered" by the Hudson River School of American Painters in the middle of the 19th century. The natural environment has meant different things to different "layers of summer-visitor culture" ^{3/} over the years depending on their financial capabilities, their personal predilections, their education, and their cultural backgrounds. In the future, the same rocks, the same seascape, mountains, flora and fauna and climate can bring to many hundreds of thousands of additional individuals the particular kind and degree of pleasure each one is capable of feeling in response to a natural setting which is truly unique. After all, the highest mountain on the U.S. Atlantic Seaboard is here, and the only fjord. Here also is the single coastal area which is graced with mountains and forest.

^{3/} Samuel Eliot Morison, The Story of Mount Desert Island, Atlantic-Little Brown, 1960.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Manufacturing:

Since Bar Harbor has little hope of attracting a manufacturing enterprise, it is recommended that Bar Harbor civic leaders establish an alliance with Ellsworth for cooperative effort to attract new industry to Ellsworth. The location, transportation facilities and already established industries of Ellsworth represent a foundation for future expansion which could benefit Bar Harbor residents as well as residents of the entire area. A regional organization, possibly instigated through Bar Harbor efforts, could be even more effective in attracting industry to Ellsworth. While Ellsworth would be the primary beneficiary of such efforts if they were successful, every nearby community stands to gain to whatever extent new job opportunities are provided. The most likely alternative for Bar Harbor and its neighbor towns alike is distinctly less palatable - no new industry and no new manufacturing jobs.

B. Retail and Service Trades:

The central shopping and ferry terminal areas could both be considerably more economically productive than they currently are. Although private investment is the key to expansion at both locations, town policy and civic group action could be importantly instrumental in encouraging such investment. The downtown shopping center could capture many more consumer dollars if its stores could offer merchandise attractive to year-around island shoppers, if the physical appearances of streets and retail establishments were more attractive and if cooperative retailing practices emphasizing customer convenience were instituted by the merchants. The latter should particularly include standardized store opening and closing hours and provision of adequate and convenient shopper parking facilities.

The Bar Harbor shopping center presently has little visual appeal, a factor too often discounted by merchants of long-time experience. Wide-spread automobile ownership has the effect, among others, of enabling consumers to choose among shopping centers within a wide radial distance from their homes. The days are gone when the neighborhood store could count on a captive clientele, as it were, consisting of everyone who lived within walking distance. Today Bar Harbor retailers must compete for Mt. Desert Island consumer dollars with merchants as far away as Ellsworth and at this point in time, they are competing unsuccessfully. Moreover, the Bar Harbor shopping center is sufficiently unattractive to discourage a great deal of potential patronage by tourists and vacationers.

Depending on the extent of building deterioration and housing blight, federally aided urban renewal under the Housing Act of 1954 offers one possible approach to the Bar Harbor central area problems. However, private and municipal action could be materially effective even without federal funds. In fact, the primary requisite for attracting more shopping dollars to Bar Harbor, without which no amount of federal spending could be effective, is cooperative civic action by merchants, town administration and civic organizations.

C. Recreation Oriented Business:

The remarkably large number of tourists entering Bar Harbor during the summer months warrants more investment than is now extant in modern motels, commercial camping facilities, housekeeping cottages, restaurants, dancing, dining and cocktail establishments and other kinds of recreational and entertainment facilities, including the outdoor variety. Again private investment is the key but municipal policy may be designed to encourage individual action by means of town ordinances and certain kinds of municipal expenditures. For instance, public funds could be used for the development of a waterfront park, a shoppers' mall in the vicinity of the ferry terminal, a childrens' playground convenient for ferry passengers, a public salt or fresh water swimming pool, roadside picnic areas just outside the urban area and improved harbor facilities for pleasure boats.

D. Seasonal and Retirement Residences:

Bar Harbor is a potentially attractive retirement location for such elderly people as do not seek a warm climate. Moreover there are some land areas, notably south of the shopping center, which are particularly well suited for such residential use. New housing construction should be controlled to insure maintenance of property and aesthetic values. Public relations and promotional efforts on the part of the town might be designed to attract prospective home builders who are seeking a combination vacation location and retirement home. Since most such people are likely to be in their middle years, they seldom have school-age children calling for outlay of public funds.

CENTRAL AREA STUDY

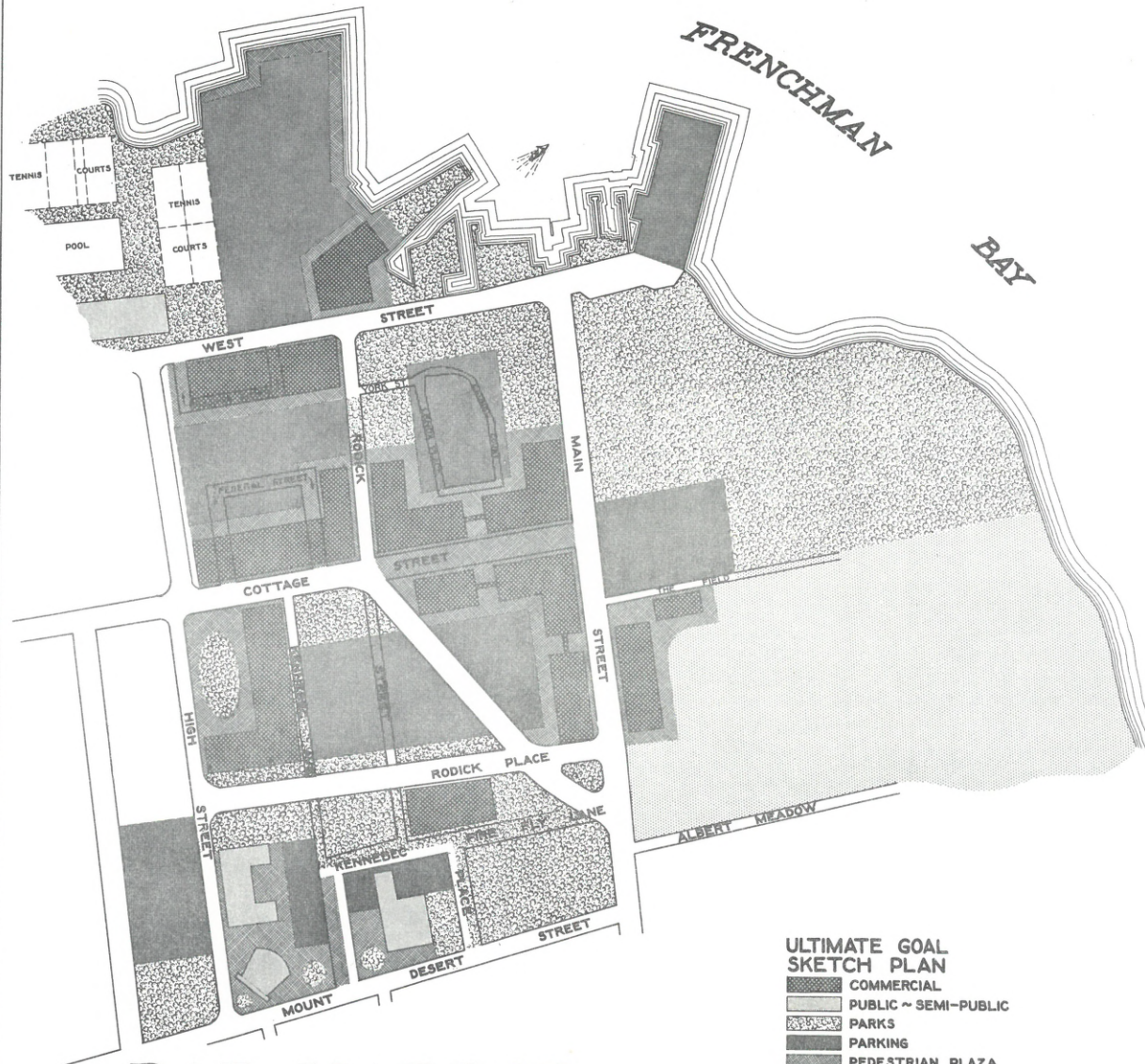
Introduction:

The future of Bar Harbor points toward fuller exploitation of the tourist-business potential resulting from the ever increasing numbers of vacationers who pass through Bar Harbor. Currently, there are indications that many of the hundreds of thousands who either use the Bluenose Ferry or are destined for Acadia National Park literally do just pass through Bar Harbor. It is certainly in the interest of Bar Harbor merchants and indirectly in the interest of the citizenry in general to induce more passers-through to stop and shop in Bar Harbor.

The Bar Harbor central business district is a weak link in a relatively strong chain of tourist amenities. It is a very important link because here tourist dollars enter the Bar Harbor income stream to then be distributed and redistributed townwide in the form of wages, profits and taxes, to be reused for personal expenditures and community services and facilities.

In addition, the Bar Harbor central business district has an opportunity to attract a larger share of year-around shopping dollars from local residents and from residents of nearby communities than it now appears to be doing. In order to do this it must compete more successfully with Ellsworth than now appears to be the case.

The central business district is described for the purpose of this study as bounded northerly by the waterfront, westerly by High Street, southerly by Mount Desert Street and easterly by the back lot lines of the buildings facing Main Street.



BAR HARBOR

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE
CENTRAL AREA

1961

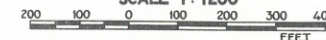
JAMES W. SEWALL COMPANY PLANNING CONSULTANTS, OLD TOWN, MAINE

ULTIMATE GOAL SKETCH PLAN

- COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC ~ SEMI-PUBLIC
- PARKS
- PARKING
- PEDESTRIAN PLAZA
- RESIDENTIAL



SCALE 1:1200



ZONING ORDINANCE

Zoning means the designation of specific land areas in a community for certain specific uses and the establishment of certain kinds of minimum standards for the improvement of land within those zones. The zoning ordinance is drafted to fit and to complement the townwide comprehensive plan. It represents one of the most powerful tools in the hands of the Planning Board and town administrative officials for implementing the town plan. Thus a given area may be planned for industry but unless it is legally protected from other kinds of development, its value for industrial use may be destroyed by construction of homes, of stores or of other kinds of buildings which would not be appropriate for an industrial area. The zoning ordinance legally defines such an area and protects it from unsuitable development. Likewise, an area zoned for single-family residential use is protected from the conversion or construction of buildings for rooming-house use, commercial or industrial uses and from other kinds of development which, because of their inappropriateness, would tend to depress the value of single-family residential property.

In addition to distributing land and building uses wisely by geographic area, the zoning ordinance establishes minimum standards for lot sizes, yard spaces between buildings and between streets and buildings and establishes maximum heights for buildings. Such restrictions are designed to insure adequate light and air and ease of fire control.

A zoning ordinance affects only those buildings constructed or converted after adoption of the ordinance. It does not affect already established uses.

Zoning is not new to Bar Harbor. Although the ordinance now in effect has many desirable features, it was drafted many years ago when the pattern of development was very different from what it is today. The proposed new zoning ordinance, which would replace the existing legislation, is designed to complement the 1960 Comprehensive Plan and to encourage the kinds of development which represent healthy growth trends for Bar Harbor. At the same time, it incorporates those elements of the existing ordinance which still have value.

Summary of Recommended Bar Harbor Zoning Ordinance:

A draft zoning ordinance has been submitted to the Planning Board for its approval before submission to the Town Meeting. It establishes eight kinds of zoning districts as follows:

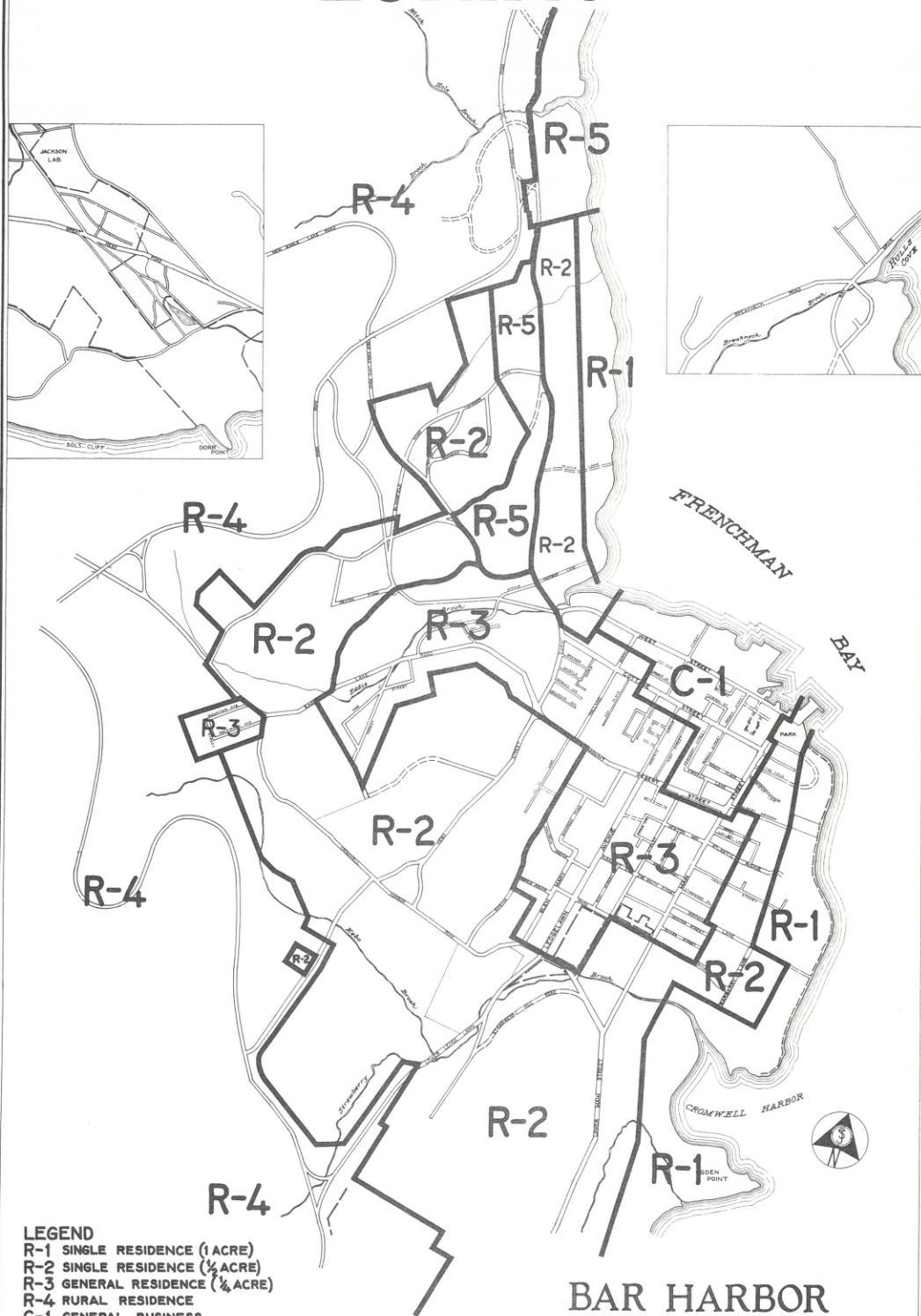
- a.) Single Residence Districts - 1 acre
- b.) Single Residence Districts - 1/2 acre
- c.) General Residence Districts
- d.) Rural Residence Districts
- e.) Transient Residence Districts
- f.) General Business Districts
- g.) Transient Commercial Districts
- h.) Industrial Districts

The following table summarizes permitted uses and major area requirements by zoning district.

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT ZONING:

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>MINIMUM LOT SIZE</u>	<u>FRONT YARD</u>	<u>SIDE YARD</u>	<u>REAR YARD</u>	<u>LOT COVERAGE</u>	<u>FRONTAGE</u>	<u>LAND USE</u>
R-1 Residence	1 Acre	25 Ft.	20 Ft.	25 Ft.	30% of Lot	100 Ft.	Single Family Residences
R-2 Residence	1/2 Acre	25 Ft.	20 Ft.	25 Ft.	30% of Lot	100 Ft.	Single Family Residences
R-3 Residence	1/4 Acre	25 Ft.	15 Ft.	20 Ft.	30% of Lot	75 Ft.	1,2 and multi-family residences, tourist homes
R-4 Rural Residence	1 Acre	40 Ft.	30 Ft.	30 Ft.	30% of Lot	200 Ft.	Farming and single family residences
R-5 Transient Residence	15,000 sq. ft.	45 Ft.	20 Ft.	25 Ft.	30% of Lot	85 Ft.	Motels, Hotels, Camp- grounds, Recreation Use
C-1 General Business	1/4 Acre if used for residence None if for business	None	None	15 Ft.	40% of Lot	25 Ft.	Retail Stores and Service Establishments
C-2 Transient Business	7,000 Sq. Ft.	25 Ft.	20 Ft.	20 Ft.	30% of Lot	85 Ft.	Drive-in stores and services, tourist accommodations
I-1 Industrial	2 Sq. Ft. of open space for each sq.ft. of enclosed industrial space	25 Ft.	5 Ft.	5 Ft.	30% of Lot	85 Ft.	Industrial Uses

ZONING



- LEGEND**
- R-1 SINGLE RESIDENCE (1 ACRE)
 - R-2 SINGLE RESIDENCE (1/2 ACRE)
 - R-3 GENERAL RESIDENCE (1/4 ACRE)
 - R-4 RURAL RESIDENCE
 - C-1 GENERAL BUSINESS
 - R-5 TRANSIENT RESIDENCE

BAR HARBOR
 HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE
 BAR HARBOR PLANNING BOARD
 1960

JAMES W. SEXWALL COMPANY PLANNING CONSULTANTS, OLD TOWN, MAINE
 SCALE: 1" = 500'
 0 500 1000 1500
 FEET

